

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USEEC ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINT NL
SUBJECT: DUTCH LABOR PARTY CONGRESS

1. SUMMARY: THE PARTY THAT "WON" THE ELECTIONS BUT "LOST"
THE FORMATION IS STILL IN SEARCH OF A MISSION. A SPECIAL
DUTCH LABOR PARTY (PVDA) CONGRESS FEBRUARY 10-11 DEALT WITH
SOCIALIST PLATFORMS FOR (1) EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS
AND (2) MARCH 25 PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS AND REVEALED PRESSURES
FROM THE RANK AND FILE WITH WHICH THE PARLIAMENTARY PARTY
MUST CONTEND AS IT SHAPES ITS ROLE IN THE OPPOSITION.
END SUMMARY.

2. A SUBSTANTIAL AND VOCAL ELEMENT OF THE PVDA NOW FAVORS
FURTHER EUROPEAN INTEGRATION ONLY IF IT CAN BE ON A SOCIALIST
MODEL. BUT THE CONGRESS REJECTED MOST AMENDMENTS TO THE
EUROPEAN SOCIALIST "MANIFEST" WHICH WOULD HAVE CALLED
FOR MORE NATIONAL CONTROL OF EEC POLICY, EASING EARLIER FEARS
OF PVDA LEADERS THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD TURN THE PARTY AWAY
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FROM ITS TRADITIONAL PRO-EUROPEAN INTEGRATION STANCE. PARTY
CHAIRMAN IEN VAN DEN HEUVEL SOUGHT TO PREEMPT RADICAL VOICES
BY DECLARING THAT PVDA'S FAITH IN THE NEW UNITED EUROPE WAS
"WAVERING" BECAUSE THE EEC HAD BROUGHT ABOUT CONCENTRATION OF
ECONOMIC POWER AT THE EXPENSE OF DEMOCRATIC IDEALS. VAN DEN
HEUVEL ADVOCATED WATCHFUL AND RESERVED PARTICIPATION IN CON-
TINUED EUROPEAN INTEGRATION. EEC SOCIAL AFFAIRS COMMISSIONER

HENK VREDELING, WHO STILL COMMANDS CONSIDERABLE AUTHORITY IN HIS PARTY, ADVOCATED CONTINUED STRONG DUTCH SOCIALIST EFFORTS FOR EUROPEAN UNITY.

3. THE CONGRESS PASSED AMENDMENTS CALLING FOR (1) PROTECTION OF DOMESTIC SOCIALIST POLICIES FROM INTERFERENCE BY EEC POLICIES, (2) A SHIFT OF EXECUTIVE POWER FROM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TO THE EEC COMMISSION, (3) A DECISIVE VOICE FOR EC PARLIAMENT IN NAMING OF EUROPEAN COMMISSION MEMBERS, (4) RESTRICTING EEC MEMBERSHIP TO COUNTRIES WITH PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY, (5) A GOVERNMENT POLICY TO PROVIDE JOBS AND GUARANTEED EMPLOYMENT, (6) A CURB ON NEW ATOMIC REACTORS UNLESS ACCOMPANIED BY GUARANTEES AGAINST TERRORISTS, PROLIFERATION AND PROCEDURES FOR PROPER HANDLING OF WASTES, AND (7) OPPOSITION TO WEST GERMAN "BERUFSVERBOTE."

3. IN ACCORDANCE WITH CUSTOM, THE CONGRESS VOTED DOWN THE PARTY LEADERSHIP ON SEVERAL ISSUES. IT VOTED TO SUPPORT A "RUSSEL TRIBUNAL" SCHEDULED TO BE HELD IN FRANKFURT TO INVESTIGATE HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES IN FRG. ALSO, IT PASSED A RESOLUTION TO BOYCOTT THE WORLD SOCCERCUP FINALS IN ARGENTINA IN JUNE. HERE, THE CONGRESS SHOWED ITSELF BEHIND THE ACTION. FORMER PRIME MINISTER DEN UYL, WHO HAD EARLIER FAVORED SUCH A BOYCOTT, CAME BACK FROM A RECENT MEETING OF SOCIALIST LEADERS IN GERMANY PERSUADED--MOSTLY BY HIS ARGENTINE SOCIALIST COLLEAGUES--THAT IT WOULD BE BETTER TO ATTEND AND GIVE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PUBLICITY TO ARGENTINA THAN TO STAY AWAY.

4. EVEN THOUGH THE PROVINCIAL ELECTIONS ARE LITTLE MORE THAN A MONTH AWAY, THE PARTY SEEMED UNABLE TO FOCUS ON NATIONAL ISSUES UPON WHICH MOST VOTERS WILL BASE THEIR VOTING. ON MATTERS OF LOCAL AND PROVINCIAL PARTY TACTICS, HOWEVER, THERE WAS NO LACK OF DIRECTION. IN A NEW MOVE, THE CONGRESS VOTED TO PUSH FOR THE PROCEDURE OF RECALL OF PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL ELECTED OFFICIALS BY THE LABOR PARTY. IN ORDER TO MAKE PVDA ELECTED OFFICIALS MORE AMENABLE TO PARTY DISCIPLINE, EVERY PVDA CANDIDATE WOULD COMMIT HIMSELF BEFORE ELECTION TO RESIGN AT THE BIDDING OF THE LABOR PARTY. WERE IT PUT TO A VOTE, THIS METHOD OF PARTY CONTROL OVER ELECTED OFFICIALS WOULD BE OPPOSED BY A MAJORITY OF DUTCH VOTERS, BUT THE FACT THAT IT WAS PROPOSED BY THE NETHERLANDS LARGEST POLITICAL PARTY INDICATED THAT THE IDEA BEARS WATCHING.

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